







# Historical Sketch

OF THE

First Presbyterian Congregation of Larne,

NOW KNOWN AS THE

Old Presbyterian Congregation of Larne  
and Kilwaughter.



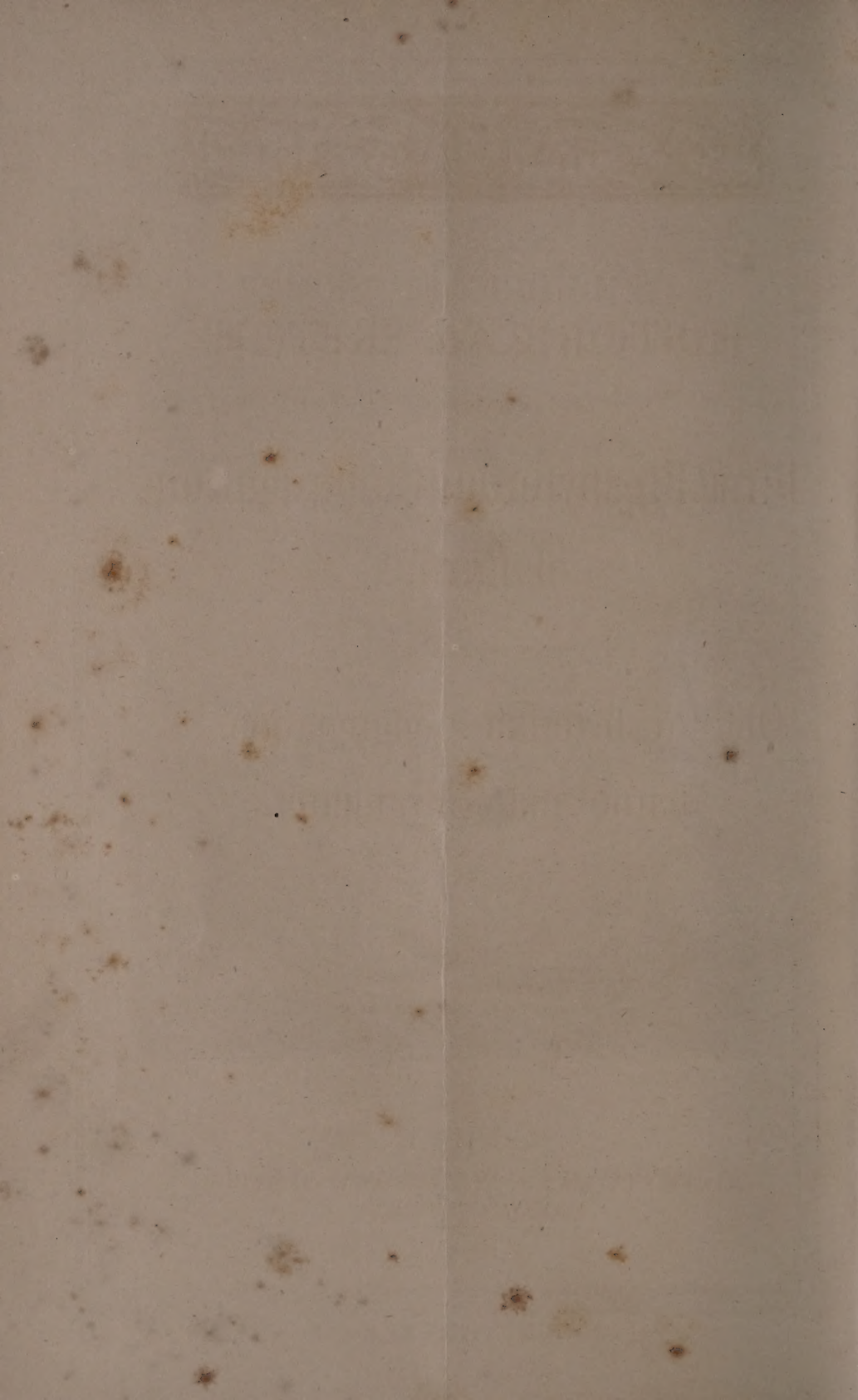
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LINENHALL WORKS.

1889

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## PREFACE.

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AT a Meeting of our Congregation, held in the School-room, on May 14th, 1888, it was resolved that the Historical Sketch then read should be printed and published.

From various circumstances, the decision then arrived at has not been carried out until now; but as, in the meantime, the Sketch has been considerably expanded by the introduction of new and interesting matter, obtained from reliable sources, it is hoped that the delay will be excused.

It is but fair to state that, in addition to Hew Scott's *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, *Minutes of General Synod of Ulster*, etc., etc., the late Rev. Classon Porter's *Congregational Memoirs* have been largely utilized in the compilation of the following pages, which are now submitted to the members of the Congregation and the public.

By order of Committee,

WILLIAM HAY,  
*Hon. Sec.*

LARNE, April, 1889.





OLD MEETING-HOUSE, LARNE.



Historical Sketch  
of the  
First Presbyterian Congregation of Larne,  
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Old Presbyterian Congregation of Larne  
and Kilwaughter.

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THE Congregation of Larne and Kilwaughter is one of the oldest Presbyterian settlements in Ulster. It should be borne in mind, however, that up to the time of the passing of the Act of Uniformity, its ministers, though Presbyterian, were episcopally ordained, and that, although they used the Presbyterian form of worship, yet they officiated in their respective parish churches, and their names appear on the Visitation Books of the Diocese of Down and Connor.

Our congregation was called "Enver" or "Inver," until about 1680, when the name of Larne began to appear in the records; and as the great bulk of our country members resided, and still reside, in Kilwaughter, it came eventually to be called Larne and Kilwaughter.

REV. GEORGE DUNBAR (1625-1637).\*

The Rev. George Dunbar, usually spoken of as the first Presbyterian Minister of Larne, was of the family of Dunbar of Cumnock, in Ayrshire. Where he was educated is not known, nor is it certain whether he graduated. He was ordained in or about 1590, how or by whom is not known, but it is certain that he was in Episcopal orders. In 1590 he was admitted as minister of Cumnock, and he sat

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\* See Hew Scott's *Fasti Ecclesiae Scotticae*.

as a member of the General Assembly in 1602 and 1605. In 1608 he was translated to First Ayr, and on 12th October, 1611, he was removed from his charge by the Privy Council and imprisoned at Dumbarton for the offence of praying for his banished predecessor, John Welsh (father of Josias Welsh, afterwards minister of Templepatrick). In 1613 he was instituted minister of Second Ayr, and in 1619 he returned to First Ayr, his previous charge. On 10th January, 1622, he was deprived of his charge by the High Commission Court for not conforming to the Articles of Perth, and was imprisoned at Dumfries.

These five "Articles," passed in 1618 by an Assembly largely influenced by courtiers of King James I., and enacted as laws by a Scottish Parliament in 1621, enjoined:—

"Kneeling at the Sacrament; the administration of  
 "it in private houses to the infirm and sick; the public  
 "baptism of infants, except in extreme cases; the  
 "catechising of children and their presentation to the  
 "bishops; and the observance of Christmas, Easter,  
 "Ascension Day, and Whitsuntide."

Dunbar appears to have been sent afterwards to Blackness. On the 30th July, 1624, the High Commission Court ordered that he be sent to Ireland, and on 22nd September he agreed to acquiesce to His Majesty's pleasure. He is described at that time as "ane decrepite, poore, aged man." He landed at Carrickfergus, but found no opening there, and, after trying Ballymena, he arrived at Larne. Here he was instituted at the parish church, and as the statement is that he was "twelve years at Larne," the date of his institution must be 1625. In May, 1632, he was suspended by Bishop Echlin, but was re-instated in May, 1634. In November, 1634, he was again suspended. Whether he was again re-instated does not appear, but it is remarkable that he was *not* one of the ministers who refused to subscribe the New Canons in 1636. In 1637 he was deposed by Bishop Leslie, and returned to Scotland. In 1638 he was admitted minister of Mid-Calder, and died there in 1641.

Though, without doubt, there were Presbyterians in Larne after Dunbar's departure in 1637, yet there is no evidence of the existence of a Presbyterian congregation there till 1642. It was the case of a parish under Episcopal rule, but whose minister was more inclined to Presbyterian ways



than the bishops liked. Who preached in the interval between Dunbar and Hall is not known, but we may be perfectly certain, that if there was a regular minister, he was either an Episcopalian, or under Episcopal jurisdiction. To assist in quelling the insurrection of 1641 the Scottish army of Major-General Robert Munro landed at Carrickfergus in April, 1642. This army was attended by its chaplains, amongst whom came Livingstone, who was attached to Sir John Clotworthy's regiment, and who states that in addition to staying and preaching six weeks at Carrickfergus, and other six weeks at Antrim, he also preached sometimes "in other parishes of the coast-side about," and it is probable that Larne was one of the places that partook of his services. At any rate, Larne is mentioned by Adair as amongst the congregations that were "first in case for elderships," and to which ministers were therefore sent as supplies by the army presbytery, which was organised at Carrickfergus on the 10th June, 1642. This army presbytery, then constituted at Carrickfergus, was the first presbytery in Ireland, and the history of Presbyterianism in Ulster and in Ireland may be fairly considered to commence in 1642.

REV. THOMAS HALL, A.M. (1646-1695).\*

In August, 1646, the Rev. Thomas Hall, A.M., was ordained as minister of the Presbyterian congregation of Larne, and his ministry continued, with some interruptions, up to his death. In the early part of his ministry he preached in the parish church, and received the tithes. In consequence of political troubles between 1649 and 1653, Mr. Hall is believed to have resided in Scotland, having been banished from Ireland in consequence of his loyalty to Charles I. In the year 1656 the settled ministers, under an arrangement effected by Henry Cromwell, received each an income of £100 per year at least, and in case the income from the parish did not reach that sum, the difference was made up from the Treasury of Tithes. This arrangement appears to have continued up to 1661, when Mr. Hall and other Presbyterian ministers were ejected from the parish churches by Bishop Jeremy Taylor.

For the next seven years it is not known how the Presbyterians of Larne fared, as the "maintenance" granted by the Government was withdrawn, nor do we know where the congregation worshipped. The first Presbyterian Meeting-house

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\* See Hew Scott's *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanæ*.

erected in Larne was probably in 1668, on the grounds where the Old Presbyterian Meeting-house of Larne and Kilwaughter now stands, and here Mr. Hall ministered with great acceptance to his people during the remainder of his life.

"In 1668, the severity of the prelates began to relax a little, and the Presbyterians ventured on the bold step of erecting some places of Divine worship. The old meeting-house of Larne was built that year, or at least soon after; it stood upon the ground now occupied by the Unitarian house. 'Its style of architecture,' says the Rev. Classon Porter, 'was very unpretending: its walls were very low, it had a thatched roof, and altogether presented, we are sure, a very humble appearance. The ground connected with it was very circumscribed, or rather it had no enclosed ground at all; for it stood without a boundary wall, and for a long time without even a ditch, in an open field, where the people on week-days were in the habit of cleaning their corn, and the youngsters of the town assembled to play shinny.'"—*Historical and Literary Memorials of Presbyterianism in Ireland*, by Dr. Witherow, 1st series, p. 97.

It is recorded in the Minutes of the "Antrim Meeting" of 1688, that Messrs. James Hutchinson, John Dunlop, and Patrick Crawford were the representatives of the Larne congregation. The names of Hutchinson and Dunlop have disappeared from the congregational roll, but we still have a lineal descendant of Mr. Crawford in the person of the present Mr. Patrick Crawford.

Mr. Hall died in 1695, and was buried in the parish church-yard of Larne, where his tombstone can still be seen, the inscription upon which is as follows:—

"Here restes in the Lord the body of the Reverend  
 "and Great Master Thomas Hall, who continued a very  
 "worthy and faithful pastor of this parish, and a considerable pillar and ornament of this church, for about  
 "fifty years, who, though he died A.D. 1695, and of his  
 "age 75, yet is most worthy to live in the memory of  
 "posterity, to whom he hath left a rare example of  
 "faithfulness, gravity, and wisdom as a minister; of  
 "integrity and solid piety as a Christian; of constancy  
 "as a sufferer in all vicissitudes of times for the truth  
 "and simplicity of the gospel of Christ; and, after all,  
 "of crowning his great virtues with most admirable  
 "humility and modesty; and so lived an eminent  
 "blessing to the world, and departed therefrom much  
 "desired in it."

To this inscription the following is appended :—

“Renewed by the First Presbyterian Congregation  
“of Larne, A.D. 1821.—J. C. Ledlie, Minister.”

After Mr. Hall's death an interregnum occurred.

#### REV. WILLIAM LEECH.

The Rev. William Leech succeeded Mr. Hall in 1697, but his ministry was a short one.

#### REV. WILLIAM OGILVIE (1700-1712).

The Rev. William Ogilvie was ordained to the charge of the congregation in 1700, and continued minister until his death in September, 1712. During his ministry he resided on what was then the parish farm in Ballyloran, now occupied by Mr. M'Fall, and this farm, together with other portions of the townland which came into his possession by his marriage with Miss Agnew, of Kilwaughter, continued to be the property of his descendants for about 140 years after his death. His remains were interred in Larne church-yard, where a handsome marble monument is erected to his memory.

#### JAMES HOOD (1715-1716).

We now arrive at a period—the date of the origin of the second congregation in Larne—about which there has been some misconception. This misconception appears to have arisen from two causes—the date 1627 placed in 1844 over the front of the meeting-house, adjacent to Larne Bridge, and the title of the brief sketch of Presbyterianism in Larne given in *The History of Congregations of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland*, edited by Dr. W. D. Killen, and published in 1886. With respect to the above-named date, it may be said if it appeared anywhere it should be on the front of the Old Presbyterian Meeting-house; but even then it would be an incorrect one, as has been shewn from Scott's *Fasti*. The date, as gleaned from that source, of the first ministry with Presbyterian leanings, and which was not connected with that congregation, but which was exercised in the parish church, was 1625. The history of continuous Presbyterianism does not begin before 1642, the date of the formation of the first



presbytery in Carrickfergus; while the date of the commencement of the first decidedly Presbyterian ministry at Larne was not until 1646. As to the heading in the *History*, it may be said that this is very misleading. There, the heading appears as "Larne 1st." Now this "1st" evidently means first in connection with the General Assembly; and so it has been, not unnaturally, inferred in the absence of more accurate and authentic information, that the congregation in question was the original Presbyterian congregation in Larne; whereas, as has been conclusively shewn, a Presbyterian congregation had existed here for at least seventy years previously. It may be further noted that in the printed Minutes of the General Synod of Ulster, up to 1821, both congregations are called "Larne" simply, but that from 1822 to 1829, both inclusive, our congregation is called "First Larne" and the other "Second Larne." Moreover, in all documents referring to our congregation emanating from Government Offices, the designation used is First Larne.

Mr. Ogilvie died in 1712. The pulpit appears to have been vacant for nearly three years, during the latter part of which time the congregation was much distracted respecting the appointment of a successor. The majority of the congregation were in favour of calling Mr. James Hood, a probationer, while the minority wished to call Mr. Samuel Getty, also a probationer, and a member of a local influential family. So far as is known, doctrinal differences had nothing to do with the dispute. The question was submitted to the Synod, and the following particulars respecting it, courteously supplied by Rev. Dr. Orr, Clerk of the General Assembly, may prove interesting:—

Extracts from General Synod, which met at Belfast, June 15, 1714—

"The refer from the Presbytery of Antrim (subscribed by the Clerk of that Presbytery) to this Synod, the cause of which refer is, the difficulty they have to plant the congregation of Larne, being read, also the minutes of that Presbytery relative of that affair, likewise a petition from a part of that congregation desiring that Mr. James Hood, probationer, may be their fixed pastor, Mr. Patrick Agnew, with other Commissioners to prosecute their purpose to have Mr. Hood, were heard. The Presbytery Minutes do signify that there is another part of the congregation who press for one Mr. Samuel Getty, to be the fixed pastor of the congregation; none of the people for Mr. Getty appeared now in this Synod, the Presbytery informed the Synod, that the people were told that this matter in debate would be brought

“into the Synod, yet they have gone away, but left a protest  
 “against referring it to the Synod, it being moved that seeing  
 “the papers of the party for Mr. Hood who are present, have  
 “been read in Synod, that the papers of the absent party for  
 “Mr. Getty be also read, that there be noe shadow of partiality  
 “in the Synod, ordered that the papers of the absent party  
 “be read, which was done.

“It was proposed as a good expedient, to heal the rents  
 “among that people that the parties (seeing they can’t agree  
 “in one of these probationers) quit them both and agree in a  
 “third person. Mr. Mairs, Mr. Orr, Mr. Lang, and Dr. Fer-  
 “guson were appointed to come out and converse with Mr.  
 “Agnew and those who appear for Mr. Hood and signify to the  
 “people how convenient it would be for the whole congregation  
 “to unite in a third person, seeing it doth not yet appear that  
 “they will unite in either Mr. Hood or Mr. Getty.

“The brethren, with Dr. Ferguson returning, made  
 “report that they delivered the message, and communed with  
 “Mr. Agnew and the Commissioners that appeared for Mr.  
 “Hood, that these gentlemen appear willing to take the  
 “Synod’s advice. Upon which we came to this question,  
 “whether we will advise them and the other party to waive  
 “the prosecution of this affair and lay aside thoughts of  
 “calling any of those young gentlemen, Mr. Hood, or Mr.  
 “Getty, unless they come to some desirable unanimity in the  
 “choice of one of them. It carried by a majority advise them  
 “to it. We also agree that if Mr. Agnew, &c., do not  
 “acquiesce in this advice, they shall have a full hearing of  
 “their cause on Monday next at 2 o’clock in the afternoon.  
 “In the meantime, this Synod is of opinion that Mr. Agnew  
 “and the rest who are for calling Mr. Hood, and attended  
 “here, have acted regularly in what steps they made before us,  
 “and it is only for peace’ sake we have given them this advice.  
 “We’re dissatisfied with the obstinacy of the other party as  
 “by their expressions in their paper read to us.

“That this advice may be the better managed it is agreed  
 “that Mr. Gowan go to Larne and preach there to-morrow,  
 “and he is to take the conveniency of advising both parties,  
 “that both parties may fall from Mr. Hood and Mr. Getty,  
 “seeing they cannot agree in one of them, and unite in calling  
 “a third person; and if the advice be not embraced, that the  
 “parties concerned may attend this Synod on Monday next  
 “at 4 a.meridim, at which time the whole affair shall be dis-  
 “cussed and determined.”

The foregoing paragraphs refer to what was done on the  
 Saturday. The following transpired on the Monday :—

“Mr. Gowan made report that according to appointment he went to Larne, convened the people, and delivered the Synod’s advice as before mentioned; that their answer was, they embraced the Synod’s advice, that if they cannot unite in Mr. Hood or Mr. Getty, they will fix on a third person. His diligence was approved.”

In addition to the foregoing, the following extract from a M.S. which came into the possession of the late Rev. Classon Porter, and which was written about eighty years since, by an old resident of Larne, may also prove interesting:—“When my great grandfather came to this place, it was his fortune to be settled just neighbour to the clergyman who was minister in Larne, a Mr. Ogilvie—a very godly, good man, with whom he formed a correspondence. Mr. Ogilvie was the minister at Larne, and there was none else but the curate minister of the Church of England. But Mr. Ogilvie was a Presbyterian minister who preached in the west end of the town, greatly respected and beloved by all who heard him. At his decease, the people differed so in their choice of a new minister, that nigh one half of the people went and built a new house for themselves at what is called Larne Bridge, and so it is to be seen at present.”

Contrary to the advice given by Synod and apparently accepted, each party adhered to its favourite candidate, and eventually Mr. Hood was ordained to the charge of the original congregation; while those who had supported the candidature of Mr. Getty, withdrew and formed themselves into a separate congregation, and chose that gentleman as their first minister.

From the Synodical Records it is not absolutely certain that the ordinations, as stated in the *History of Presbyterian Congregations in Ireland*, took place on the same day, though it is not unreasonable to suppose that they did. From the punctuation of the following entry in the Minutes of the General Synod of Ulster, under the heading “Ordained since last Synod,” it may be perhaps inferred that Mr. Taylor, of Cairncastle, and Mr. Hood, of Larne, were ordained on 14th of June, 1715, and Mr. Getty, at Inver, 15th of June of the same year. The following is an exact transcript (also kindly supplied by Dr. Orr) of the entry referred to:—

Antrim Presbytery ordain’d Mr. William Taylor jun’ at  
Cairncastle June 14 and Mr. James Hood at Larne, and Mr. 1715  
Samuel Getty at Inver June 15

For ten years both congregations were in the same Presbytery—that of Antrim—but in 1725 the old Presbytery was dissolved, and a new Presbytery of Antrim was erected, of which our congregation was a constituent part. A new



Presbytery of Templepatrick was also at this time erected, in which the new congregation was included. Mr. Hood survived his ordination little more than a year, dying on October 12, 1716. His remains were interred in Larne churchyard, beside those of Mr. Hall. The inscription on his tombstone is as follows:—

“Here lyes the body of the Rev. James Hood, M.A., Minister of the congregation of Larne. He was a youth of considerable abilities, which afforded a pleasing prospect of his future services in the Church: a good Preacher: and diligent in his short labours, a faithful friend, cheerful, affable, and of courteous mind and winning behaviour. He had much at heart the peace of the Church, bewailed divisions among Protestants, and the intemperate heat of men of all persuasions; and what finished his character was his unaffected piety, for he aimed rather to be than appear religious, and his extensive charity for men of different sentiments from himself, being of catholic principles, and not of a party spirit, confining religion to his own side. He lived just to show himself to the world, and died lamented in the year of his age 30, October 12, A.D. 1716, having laboured in the Gospel in this place one year and about four months.—*Renewed, 1858.—Classon Porter, Minister.*”

#### REV. JOSIAS CLUGSTON (1717-1775).

The Rev. Josias Clugston was Mr. Hood's successor, and settled here in 1717. He ministered for the long period of fifty-eight years. Mr. Clugston was probably a native of the town of Antrim. He was one of those ministers who, in consequence of their opposition to subscription in the General Synod, were included in the new Presbytery of Antrim, which, as previously stated, was erected in 1725, but cut off from “ecclesiastical jurisdiction” with the Synod in 1726. It is stated that Mr. Clugston became Clerk of the new Non-Subscribing Presbytery. He appears to have been a man of retiring and charitable disposition. As to his pulpit services, we have no evidence to show that controversy entered largely therein; but there seems to have been no lack of interest in theological questions on the part of the session. Entries in the old Session Book show that at their periodical meetings the various doctrines of the *Westminster Confession* were freely discussed, such as the right of private judgment; what constitutes heresy; the Trinity; imputed righteousness; whether a person was obliged to believe what he could not understand;

the imputation of Adam's first sin to all his posterity; the union of two natures in Christ; prayer, to whom and for whom; the miseries of the fall, and whether they were properly described by the *Confession*, and whether infants were damned thereby; concerning the light of Nature leaving men inexcusable, and yet not being sufficient for salvation; and of a man's believing anything as an article of faith merely because another person believed it.

As indicative of the feeling existing at this period between the two congregations, it may be noted that another minute, dated 1734, records how a member of the Enver congregation bequeathed £1 to be divided amongst the poor of the old congregation; while other minutes, dated December, 1735, show that a mor-cloth having been provided, it was resolved—

“That, considering that we are nearer allied to the new congregation, or congregation of Enver, than any other, the hire of said pall to any funeral without our bounds shall be a Crown; yet to the new congregation only Four Shillings English; and to our own Half-a-Crown.”

In 1752 the meeting-house—a thatched structure, which had been repaired in 1700—was rebuilt, the roof being slated.

In the minister's retiring-room there is a memento of Mr. Clugston, in the form of a massive oaken chair, presented many years ago to the late Rev. Classon Porter by Mrs. Robinson, formerly of Ballyboley, who died in Larne in January, 1889. Mrs. Robinson informed Mr. Porter that her mother remembered seeing Mr. Clugston, when in an enfeebled condition, sitting in this chair outside his house. He died at Ballyboley, in the house now owned and occupied by Mr. John M'Ninch, August 10, 1775, in the 80th year of his age, and was buried in Larne churchyard.

#### REV. ROBERT SINCLAIR (1755-1795).

The Rev. Robert Sinclair, M.A., was ordained colleague to the Rev. Josias Clugston on June 24, 1755, and became sole pastor of the congregation at that gentleman's death in 1775. During the first twenty years of his ministry he resided at Kilwaughter House, as the castle was then called, where he acted as tutor in the Agnew family. As illustrating the form in which calls to Presbyterian ministers at this period were drawn up, a copy of that presented to Mr. Sinclair may be quoted, and is as follows:—

"To the Rev. Mr. Robert Sinclair.

"We, the Gentlemen, Session, and other Protestant  
 "Dissenting Members of the Old Congregation of Larne,  
 "being desirous of having a colleague to our present worthy  
 "and beloved Pastor, the Rev. Mr. Josias Clugston, settled  
 "among us, to take part with him in the labours of the  
 "ministerial office, do, by the advice and concurrence of our  
 "said Pastor, and with the approbation of the Rev. Presbytery  
 "of Antrim, call and invite you, Mr. Robert Sinclair, and by  
 "these presents heartily entreat you to take the office of a  
 "Gospel minister amongst us; and as we expect to receive  
 "benefit from your ministry, we, on our part, promise to  
 "contribute towards your support according to our ability,  
 "and at Mr. Clugston's decease (if you survive him) to  
 "receive you as our sole Pastor, and upon your acceptance  
 "of this our Call, to give you all dutiful respect, encourage-  
 "ment, and obedience in the Lord."

Mr. Sinclair exercised his ministry at Larne during stirring times. Infected with the martial ardour of the period, he, along with his friend and patron, Mr. Agnew, placed himself at the head of the corps raised in Kilwaughter in anticipation of a possible French invasion.

He was afterwards identified with the Volunteer movement, and on the occasion of a review at Ballygally Head, when, from some reason, the commanding officer failed to appear, Mr. Sinclair, at the request of the volunteers, performed the duties of the absent officer in an efficient and dignified manner.

Mr. Sinclair married, and afterwards resided for some time in Larne, and thence he removed to Drumahoe, where he died, February 20, 1795. His funeral was long spoken of by old residents as the largest ever seen in this part of the country. His remains were interred in the same grave wherein, twenty years before, had been laid those of his friend and predecessor, Mr. Clugston. On their common tombstone there is an inscription in Latin, a free translation of which is as follows :—

"Here lie the mortal remains of two divines—namely,  
 "Josias Clugston and Robert Sinclair—each of whom had  
 "been minister of the older congregation of Dissenting  
 "Protestants at Larne—the former for fifty-eight years, till  
 "his death, at the age of eighty, on the 10th day of August,  
 "1775; the latter for thirty-nine years, till his death, at the  
 "age of seventy, on the 20th day of February, 1795. These



“true friends, men of learning, of godliness, of humanity, by  
 “their doctrine and conversation exemplified the Christian  
 “religion with piety and probity.”

REV. JAMES WORRAL, B.A. (1796-1807).

After Mr. Sinclair's death the congregation was for a time divided into two parties by the rival claims of two candidates for their favour, Messrs. N. Alexander and Wm. Neilson; but, probably remembering what had occurred in 1715, both parties finally united in calling a third candidate to occupy their pulpit, in the person of Mr. James Worrall, who was ordained March 16, 1796. Mr. Worrall, a native of Limerick, had been born and brought up a member of the Church as then established by law, but in the course of his studies for the ministry of that Church, pursued at Trinity College, Dublin, of which he was a scholar, and where he obtained the degree of B.A. so complete a change came over his religious opinions that he felt bound, as an honest man, to sever his connexion with the Establishment, and to put himself as a probationer under the care of the Presbytery of Antrim. While still a probationer, he acted as tutor in the family of Sir Robert Bateson, of Belvoir. There he became acquainted with Mr. Farrel, of Magheramorne, to whose good offices he was indebted for an introduction to our congregation, of which Mr. Farrel was a member.

Judging by the evidence afforded by the Minute Book, the good people of Larne and Kilwaughter must have been very fastidious in those days with regard to the preaching powers of their pastors, as the following copy, *verbatim et literatim*, of an entry, in Mr. Worrall's own hand, will show:—

“November 1, 1795.—Mr. Worrall, then a probationer  
 “under the care of the Presbytery of Antrim, preached as a  
 “supply for the first time to this congregation, and also twice  
 “afterwards. A hearing of Mr. Worrall for four Sabbaths  
 “was then requested, and granted by Presbytery, and Rev.  
 “Mr. Vance was appointed to take the minds of the congre-  
 “gation after Mr. Worrall had preached four Sabbaths.”  
 (Mr. Vance did as requested on January 10, 1796).

Mr. Worrall exercised his ministry in Larne at a very critical period in the history of Ireland. In politics he was not only an advanced Liberal, but a United Irishman as well, for which he suffered a short term of imprisonment in Carrickfergus Castle; while his strong sympathy with the



revolutionary movement alienated from the congregation the Casement, M'Cleverty, and other families of good social standing. But that he was a thoroughly honest man, and consistent Liberal, his voluntary relinquishment of the tithe or stipend, secured in the Kilwaughter leases to the Protestant Dissenting minister of Larne and Kilwaughter, abundantly proves.

Mr. Worrall's health was never very robust, and, as the asthmatic complaint from which he suffered became so troublesome as to compel him to remove, during the winter months, from his residence at Greenlands to lodgings in the town of Larne, he was advised to try a warmer climate. In accordance with this advice, he resigned his charge in Larne on May 23, 1807, to become pastor of the congregation at Clonmel, where he ministered till his death, November 28, 1824.

#### REV. JAMES CRAWFORD LEDLIE, D.D. (1808-1832).

An interval of eleven months elapsed between the resignation of Mr. Worrall and the installation of his successor, Rev. J. C. Ledlie. During this interval the pulpit had been supplied, and other Christian ordinances dispensed, by the two neighbouring Presbyteries of Antrim and Templepatrick.

Mr. Ledlie was educated at the University of Glasgow, his career being a brilliant one, and duly recognised as such by the degree of D.D., conferred on him in 1828. He was ordained in April, 1806, at Donegore, by the Presbytery of Templepatrick, being then only twenty years of age; but his ministry in that place lasted only for two years. It is noteworthy that he was succeeded at Donegore by Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Cooke, who again succeeded Mr. M'Ewan, on the removal of the latter from Killyleagh, County Down, to Second Rosemary Street, Belfast.

In the Minutes of the Templepatrick Presbytery, with which the congregation of Donegore was connected, it is recorded that—

“At a meeting of the Committee of the Templepatrick Presbytery, held at Larne, May 2, 1808, there appeared Messrs. Robert Black and John Barklie, Commissioners from the Old Presbyterian Congregation of Larne, with an unanimous call for the Rev. Mr. Ledlie, minister of Donegore, to become their stated pastor, and praying that he may be appointed their constant supplier till next meeting of Templepatrick Presbytery.”

Mr. Ledlie was installed in Larne on June 23, 1808. In the following year, as the Minute Book shows, the roof of the meeting-house was repaired, and an iron gate put up in the opening to the yard, to defray the expense of which things, and some others of less moment which were deemed absolutely necessary, it was resolved—

“That the several members of the congregation should “be assessed in the exact proportion of stipend each pays.”

The proposition required at this juncture was half the yearly stipend paid by each holder.

In 1815 or 1816, in consequence of a difference of opinion among the members of the Second Congregation about the selection of a minister, a considerable number of those who were dissatisfied with the majority for calling a Mr. Cochrane in preference to a Mr. Eccles marched in a body to the “upper house,” as our church was then, and is to this day, popularly termed. For the accommodation of those seceders an additional gallery, called the Cochrane gallery, was erected. Mr. Eccles was a native of Larne, and after the incident mentioned became minister of Armagh. In 1828 the Committee found it necessary to have the meeting-house rebuilt, and a proposal by William Agnew, stone mason, Kilwaughter, to carry out their wishes in this respect for the sum of £470, was accepted.

Pending the erection of their new meeting-house, Dr. Ledlie and his congregation requested the use of the Parish Church for purposes of public worship, to be conducted of course at such times as would not interfere with the devotions of the regular attendants there. But the incumbent explained that it was not in his power to return the civility of the old Presbyterian congregation, which some time previously, when the Parish Church was being repaired, had placed their meeting-house at the disposal of the Episcopal Protestants of Larne for holding their services. “The canons of the “Established Church forbade,” he said, “any service to be “performed in the Parish Church except that prescribed by “the Book of Common Prayer.” The other Presbyterian congregation and their minister, however, at once and cordially granted the use of their meeting-house to Dr. Ledlie and his flock—an instance of neighbourly civility recorded in the Minute Book by the then secretary of the Old Congregation, the late Mr. Miles Atkinson, in the following words:—

“To all whom it may concern.—Be it remembered, that “the First Presbyterian congregation of Larne occupied the

“meeting-house of the Second congregation from the first Sunday of June, 1828, to the last Sunday in October, 1829, during the time their meeting-house was a re-building. This is as it should be.”

Mr. Porter remarks, however, that the new meeting-house, the present square building, which replaced the old cruciform structure, was still in an unfinished condition when he became minister in 1834.

In 1832, the congregation and their minister had an opportunity of acknowledging the courtesy of their neighbours in 1828. It is recorded that a deputation—consisting of Messrs. Snoddy, Robinson, and M’Alister—waited on the minister, session, and committee of the First Presbyterian congregation of Larne, “with a letter from the Second Presbyterian congregation of Larne, asking for the use of the old meeting-house while their own was being re-built. The request was immediately granted—Dr. Ledlie and the committee of the First congregation expressing their gratification at having an opportunity of in some measure repaying the obligation which they owed to the Second congregation, and therefore, with pleasure, granted them the use of their meeting-house for Divine service on Sundays, at two o’clock in the afternoon.”

During the earlier years of his ministry Dr. Ledlie lived in Larne, where, with the assistance of Mr. Glendy, a distinguished classical scholar, he conducted a high-class school. Subsequently he removed to Ballyboley, where he built the house and tilled the farm now occupied by Mr. James Nelson.

In 1829 he practically declined the pulpit of Second Rosemary Street, Belfast. On March 29 of that year, Dr. Bruce had attended for the purpose of taking a poll of the congregation, for Dr. Ledlie. The usual Lord’s day service had just been concluded, when, at the last moment, a letter was handed to Dr. Bruce from Dr. Ledlie declining to have the poll taken.

From childhood Dr. Ledlie suffered from a physical infirmity which made walking exceedingly difficult. Considering, therefore, over how wide an area his congregation was scattered, we cannot wonder that, after twenty-four years of service, he should, despite the warm attachment of his flock and his undoubted popularity with all classes and creeds in Larne and neighbourhood, desire a less laborious charge. Accordingly, we find him resigning the congregation of Larne and Kilwaughter, by post, in October, 1832. He



had preached his last sermon as minister thereof on August 26 of that year; and removed to Eustace Street, Dublin, where he ministered to a small but very influential congregation for twenty years longer. He died August 11, 1852, in the 67th year of his age, and forty-seventh of his ministry.

#### REV. CLASSON PORTER (1834-1885).

After Dr. Ledlie's removal to Dublin the pulpit of Larne and Kilwaughter was vacant for nearly two years. As usual, there was a difference of opinion as to who should be his successor—one section of the congregation desiring Rev. Stephenson Hunter, the other Mr. James Watson—but common sense once more prevailed. Each party fell away from its favourite candidate, and all combined in a unanimous call to Mr. Classon Porter, third son of the Rev. William Porter, of Limavady.

Mr. Porter received his preliminary education in the Academical Institution, Belfast, under the superintendence of Dr. Montgomery. Thence he removed to Manchester New College, at the time located in York, and there he studied under Charles Wellbeloved, John Kenrick, M.A., and William Hincks, F.L.S. He preached his first sermon at Welburn, Yorkshire, October 14, 1832. In 1833, Mr. Wellbeloved offered him the post of junior Hebrew tutor, and afternoon preacher at York. He preached regularly at Kendal during the vacation—*i.e.*, the months of July, August, and September, 1833. He also preached regularly at Selby, Yorkshire, during session 1833-4, probably until called to Larne. Like his predecessor, Dr. Ledlie, he was but twenty years old when ordained on July 2, 1834. At the dinner given in the evening, at which Archibald Barklie, Esq., Inver, presided, about 100 persons were present, including three clergymen of the then Established Church, and ministers and members of all religious denominations in Larne. During his long ministry many incidents, having an important bearing on the welfare of his people and of the community generally, may be mentioned. In 1836 the congregational library was established. The year following was marked by the commencement of our Sunday School. In 1838 Mr. Porter took an active part, in conjunction with Mr. Glendy, of Ballycarry, in erecting, or rather re-establishing, the congregation of Raloo, after an interval of 165 years, during which time the people on one side of the parish worshipped at Ballycarry, while those on the opposite side were connected with Larne. In the same year Mr. Porter organised



a separate Sunday School in Kilwaughter. The year following, the foundation of the school-house, which stands upon the congregational grounds, was laid by his father, Rev. W. Porter, and here for some years a female industrial education was given gratuitously by Miss Park to those who chose to avail themselves of the privilege. In 1852 the meeting-house was thoroughly repaired, painted, and lighted with gas, and from that time evening service has been conducted regularly all the year round. Three years later a harmonium, which cost £70, was introduced. In 1857 the meeting-house grounds were considerably enlarged, and enclosed with a stone wall. But Mr. Porter's activities and sympathies were not confined to his own congregation. Everything calculated to benefit the community found in him an energetic advocate. His services to primary education can hardly be over-estimated. Immediately upon the formation of the National Board he exerted himself zealously to found schools in connection therewith. But his attachment to the principle of non-sectarianism was so decided, that for many years he refused to allow the school upon our own grounds to be connected with the Board. All the schools founded by him, or with which he had any connection, were, and are to this day, conducted on strictly non-sectarian principles. In all our local charities, such as the coal and clothing funds, Mr. Porter took a lively interest, and worked energetically on their behalf. From time to time members of his congregation had bequeathed sums of money, the interest of which was to be applied for the benefit of poor householders of Larne without distinction of sect or creed. To these sums were added £100, left by the late Mrs. M'Garel to be applied for the benefit of the poor, as Mr. Porter should direct, and £50, remaining over from an old charity of a temporary nature—the interest of the whole (amounting to £800) being used as already indicated.

It was largely owing to his influence with the late Charles M'Garel, Esq., that the Town Hall and Reading-rooms, as well as the benevolent institution which crowns the eminence to the right of the Rhoddens, were erected. But for Mr. M'Garel's unexpected death there would also have been built, through Mr. Porter's influence, at least ten cottages suited to the requirements of an humbler class of society than that for which the existing building was intended. Indeed, the foundations for the cottages mentioned were already marked out when Mr. M'Garel's death put an end to Mr. Porter's benevolent project. And the idea of a high-class school was at least mooted originally by Mr. Porter.

Doubtless, had Mr. M'Garel's life been prolonged for a few years, it would have been carried into effect.

Mr. Porter's abilities were of a very high order. Those who knew him will aver that, had he adopted the law as his profession, he would have attained the very highest possible eminence therein. As it was, his intellectual accomplishments and force of character won for him a position in Larne such as has never been occupied by any other minister of any denomination in that place.

His studies lay chiefly in the direction of antiquities and history, especially the history of Presbyterianism in Ulster. His contributions to the latter have been gracefully acknowledged by the cultured historian of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Rev. Dr. Witherow.

In politics, Mr. Porter was a decided and consistent Liberal. Referring to a contested election for Co. Antrim, in which the seat was won by Mr. Agnew, of Kilwaughter, in 1792, but lost again in 1797, he remarks in *Congregational Memoirs*—"The banner of Independence, which was then "struck down, has never since been successfully raised again "in County Antrim."—*Christian Unitarian*, September, 1864. Twenty-one years later, in May, 1885, when his life was ebbing to its close, his heart was gladdened by the return of Mr. W. P. Sinclair for County Antrim. Though feeble in health, he felt bound to come from Ballygally Castle to Larne to record his vote in favour of the Liberal candidate, and when he heard the glad news of Mr. Sinclair's success he said—"Thank God, I have lived to see one victory in "County Antrim." Three days later he had gone over to the majority.

About a year previously—on July 2, 1884—on the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination in Larne, he was presented by his congregation with a complimentary address, bound in costly form as an album, and beautifully illuminated and embellished with views of the meeting-house, school-room, and grounds. The meeting at which the presentation was made, and which was presided over by David Nelson, J.P., was held in the church, and was largely attended by clerical and lay representatives of most Christian denominations in the town and neighbourhood. Of those unable to be present, none wrote in more friendly terms than the genial parish priest of Larne, the Rev. F. M'Kenna.

Like one of his predecessors, Mr. Porter for some years (fifteen) resided on and cultivated a farm at Drumahoe, but he removed thence to Larne in 1861. From Larne he re-

moved to Ballygally Castle in 1875, where he died, May 27, 1885. His remains were interred in Cairncastle churchyard, where a costly black marble cross marks their last resting-place.

#### REV. WILLIAM M'CULLOUGH (1875-1878).

In the spring of 1875 Mr. Porter, feeling his health and strength inadequate to the discharge of his pastoral and other duties, obtained permission from the Presbytery for his congregation to choose an assistant and successor to him in the work of the ministry.

The choice of the congregation fell upon the Rev. Wm. M'Cullough, of Warrenpoint, of whom it might truly be said that he was an Israelite, indeed, in whom there was no guile. Mr. M'Cullough was installed July 2, 1875, but his ministry was a short one. He died April 30, 1878. Possessed of a refined literary taste, and a voice of marvellous sweetness, his pulpit services were exceedingly chaste and elevating in tone, while his bearing and deportment were such as to win not only the affection of his flock, but also the kindly respect of his neighbours of all denominations. Amid tokens of universal sorrow, his remains were interred in the grounds adjoining the meeting-house on May 3, 1878.

#### REV. JAMES KENNEDY (1878- ).

For the second time the congregation were called upon to elect an assistant and successor to Mr. Porter. Their choice fell on Rev. James Kennedy, of Rademon, Co. Down, who was installed November 5, 1878. The only notable incident during his ministry so far has been the introduction of a fine organ, the gift of the late John Crawford, whose ancestral connection with the congregation can be traced back for more than 200 years. The instrument cost £300, while the chamber, erected behind the pulpit for its reception at the expense of the congregation, cost about £300 more. It is only just to Mr. Crawford's memory to record that his liberality to the congregation did not end with the gift of the organ. He also handed over £200—one-half to be invested for the benefit of the Sunday School, and the other half for the general benefit of the congregation, as the committee might in their judgment decide.

It may be further noted that during Mr. Porter's ministry the congregation first began to establish a permanent fund, the beginning of which was £100, bequeathed by Mr. Wm. Johnstone. Other bequests followed, so that at the passing of the Irish Church Act the whole, with accumulated interest, amounted to £500. At that time a special effort was made by the congregation, and it is pleasing to record that our total invested capital now amounts to the handsome sum of £3,000.













